

# SACRED DANCE GUILD NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT: MRS. WARREN T. JOHNSON (MARY RHODES), BOX 177 PETERBOROUGH, N. H.

EDITOR: MRS. WALTER A. TAYLOR (MARGARET FISK), 7 FORT STREET, ATHENS, OHIO

SEND \$2.00 ANNUAL DUES (PAYABLE EACH JANUARY) TO MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN, MRS. ORION SHERWOOD (LYNN) 5819 FIELDSTONE RD., NEW YORK 71, N. Y. THE DUES COVER THE SUBSCRIPTION TO THE THREE ISSUES OF THIS NEWSLETTER IN APRIL AND SEPTEMBER, 1964 AND IN JANUARY, 1965. YOUR \$2.00 MUST BE PAID IN ORDER FOR YOU TO RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER.

## SEPTEMBER 1964 ISSUE

\* \* \* \* \* SACRED DANCE GUILD FALL WORKSHOP \* \* \* \* \*

TIME Saturday, October 31, 1964 from 1 P.M. to 5 P.M.

PLACE Crane Theological School of Tufts University, Medford, Mass.

PROGRAM A two session program:

1:00 Registration and fellowship

1:30 Dance Session -

WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN CREATIVE MOVEMENT -- DIANE PESSO

3:00 Discussion Session -

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN WORKING WITH MOTION CHOIRS IN  
THE CHURCH -- JEANNE SAUNDERS

SPECIAL: Early Bird Buzz Session and Lunch for Sacred Dance Guild Members  
before the Workshop:

10:00 A.M. on Oct. 31 at the home of Jeanne Saunders

Let Jeanne know if you are coming for the Early Bird Session and Lunch  
before Oct. 21 - please. Jeanne lives at 15 Ellis Rd., Weston, Mass.

You can come via Route 117, turn north onto Lexington St., and almost  
immediately turn right onto Kendal Common Rd. which leads into Ellis.

LEADERS: DIANE PESSO of Boston is a graduate of Bennington College. She is  
a teacher and concert dancer. She has worked with Jose Limon, Martha Hill,  
Bill Bayles and Barbara Mettler. On the faculty of Emerson College and Co-  
director of the Dance Center she is well known as teacher and leader of the  
sessions in Creative Movement at the Charles St. Meeting House in Boston.

JEANNE SAUNDERS is treasurer of our Guild and has been director of  
the Motion Choir of the Waltham Unitarian- Universalist Church in Waltham, Mass

This Workshop is being held in conjunction with the Religious Arts Guild of  
the Unitarian-Universalist Association.

Write to Jeanne Saunders, 15 Ellis Rd., Weston, Mass. or to Virginia Huffine,  
17 Taft Dr., Winchester, Mass. A further announcement will be sent to those  
in the New England area.

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Correction: In the April Issue of the S.D.G. Newsletter the new officers and  
chairmen were listed. Through an error of your editor the name of the new  
Outreach Publicity Chairman was skipped. She is Miss Chrystelle Lee Trump,  
Goucher College, Towson 4, Md. Please correct your April issue placing her  
name as Outreach Chairman just below Penna. (page 6)



In the August, 1964 issue of Dance Magazine, Walter Sorrell who attended a part of the June Institute of the Sacred Dance Guild held at Drew University in Madison, N.J. wrote a review of it entitled "Sacred Dance at the Crossroads". We appreciate his report which brings our activities to the attention of the readers of Dance Magazine. A portion of the review is shared here:

. . . . This year's theme was "inspiration, education and fellowship" and the Guild could not have found two better teachers than Naomi Aleh-Leaf and Forrest Coggan.

Both are creative artists. For years Miss Aleh-Leaf has led a spirited and very active group in Boston. Her subject is the Old Testament and she bases her dances on a variety of Jewish themes. On Friday night she gave the lighting of the candles and the Sabbath prayer a festive and explanatory image, and her "Awake, O Zion" which she danced - while speaking the Isaiah lines in Hebrew - at the festival vesper service was a memorable moment. Forrest Coggan who is the choreographer of many dances on religious and folk themes, has now embarked on an ambitious program to revitalize and recreate the artistic heritage of the American Indian. He spoke the Invocation at the vesper and accompanied his words with stylized gestures which, in their simplicity, seemed just right.

But Miss Aleh-Leaf and Mr. Coggan were engaged as teachers, not as performers. And it was in this capacity that they contributed to the success of this three-day meeting. . . .

Religious expression through movement was discussed in a lecture class by Mr. Coggan, but the scope and deeper meaning of sacred dancing still remains elusive and left to the individual's experience. Jeanne Fuller and her dance group presented a "statement in dance concerning racial justice" and called it "Color Line". . . .

The Sacred Dancers now face the choice of wishing merely to express a personal experience in worship or communicating with an audience through artistically valid means. Although the number of those who believe in the sacred dance is still growing, and many more churches and synagogues avail themselves of their services than ever before, most members of the Guild realize that, so far, they have more or less functioned on an artistic level modest in scope. They know that the bulk of their work will, for some time to come, remain in the hands of the artistically inexperienced who, with the faith of the fanatic, surrenders the whole of his being to the task of wedding the holy service with his concept of devotional movement. But there is also full awareness that artistic stimulation and new creative concepts are needed to make The Movement not only grow in numbers but also in depth. In final analysis, only the sacredness of art can give heightened meaning to the very purpose of the sacred dance. . . . ."

full article pp.24 & 25 in August  
Dance Magazine

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#### Editor's note:

Is the "crossroads" between dancers who feel that "in the final analysis, only the sacredness of art can give heightened meaning to the very purpose of sacred dance" -- as opposed to those who seem to professional dancers to be as one "who, with the faith of the fanatic, surrenders the whole of his being to the task of wedding the holy service with his concept of devotional movement"? Are we not in a period of contemporary art when great creative breakthroughs come from persons completely involved? I have seen such amazing creativity with these inexperienced yet deeply aware groups that I cannot let them feel crushed by self-assured, theatre-centered dancers. As editor, I believe the strength of Sacred-Dance (hyphenated for balance) can grow tremendously as the devotionally centered and the dance centered respect each other in their own varied emphases. Then both will grow and the "crossroads" appear



many radiating beams of pathways with God, the creator and creating, in the center. Our pathways are illumined by God who welcomes all varieties of creative efforts - simple and complex.

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Also at the June Institute at Drew U. Vija Vetra was present for part of the time. Miss Vetra, a Latvian-born Australian dancer, at the vesper service presented two Indian dances and two Bach Chorales. She also participated in the morning outdoor worship service leading the dancers in ever-widening and closing circles. Miss Vetra teaches dance in Melbourne, Australia, has danced in Coventry Cathedral in England and is on tour now dancing in universities and churches in the U.S.A. She feels that her closest kinship is with Indian dancing. It was a privilege to see her artistic work.

The group of 50 attendants at Drew U. expressed their hope that they might return there next June. Everything was clean, new and offered so graciously. Jeanne Fuller and her committee are to be thanked with deep gratitude.

#### FORREST COGGAN'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS DANCE

(a reprint of his statement made at the Institute and now shared with all)

In answer to frequent inquiries regarding the basis from which I approach the teaching of dance as religious expression, I find it necessary first to state that my concept of the universe and of life is essentially a dynamic one; one of movement and of change. The development of this as a useful tool during my own dance composition has proved to be of further value in the early training of creative performers. To begin with, the physical and psychical universe are composed of what appear to be interacting forces with fluctuating relationships which continually express their changing relativities in structures of spatial and temporal dimensions.

Man's lifetime is composed of experiences of such forces and their space-time configurations. (It has been said that the organism is primarily interested in the forces that are active around it.) He learns from and attempts to control these. He himself, his society, his institutions, his history, and his point of view, as well as his environment and the ability to adjust to it, are all the result of such force relationship.

All art is an attempt by man to reconstitute, preserve, reflect, or influence the force relationships transmitted to and through him. If he wishes to share his artistic result, he must make the changing relationships of both physical and non-physical realms readily available to the sensory mechanisms of others. They, in turn, may judge the force product as to the aesthetic pleasure derived from it, its immediate impact, or its lasting influence. The art of dance capitalizes on the immediacy and intimacy of changing force relationships as they are found embodied in the human organism and as they are continually revealed through various interactions with the environment.

For instance, the forces inherent within emotional complexes may be physically objectified. In some cases they have been represented by the action of body-mass against the force of gravity. In others, they have been demonstrated by the interaction of various masses (body, bodies, etc.) in terms of approach, retreat, attraction, repulsion, equilibrium and circumvention. In still other instances they have been symbolized by configuration of body parts against negative space, etc.

Since many present-day religions are concerned with forces governing life and death, love, fear, and hatred, and since most religions seek to find for man a harmonious relationship with those forces which promise vigorous growth and continued well-being, it would seem beneficial to the student of religious dance to have training in physical objectification of his religious experiences in terms of interacting forces and changing force structures. By imposing force relationships as they are experienced in states of peace, harmony, joy, rapture, ecstasy, awe,



upon his own body and mind, the religious dancer can bring himself as a total human being with those conditions which he considers uplifting, inspiring and everlasting.

This training of the student in the expression of cosmic relativities through dance composition and performance may develop an increased awareness of force principles which underlie his own physical-psychical mechanism and may provide him with a common ground from which to communicate his deepest needs and discoveries.

(July 1, 1964)

NOAMI ALEH-LEAF made these comments relevant to the June Institute:

"I have not yet resolved to my own satisfaction just exactly what should be the goal of the 3 day institute. Would it not be wise to focus all out attention to one or two particular aspects of the S.D.G. at each institute instead of trying to cover so much ground, so lightly? The session might then conclude with a presentation of the material covered and a discussion of its fitness and validity. May I suggest that discussion periods follow mealtime. However light the repast, it's difficult to work directly after a mid-day meal.

"I find the colors too pale, prim and pretty. Where are the vibrant colors of God's palette? The sun' yellow and orange . . . the limes and greens of field and forest . . . the reds and royal purples, the seas' turquoise and the hidden coral and the deep cobalt blue of the sky?"

Ed. note: Thank you, Naomi. Back in the 1940's I was using pale colors and perhaps part of this problem comes from that. Now all my robes are the rich colors of the liturgical year - green, gold, red, purple and black - all deep hues. Men prefer to wear the deep rich colors, too.

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\* CONGRATULATIONS TO RUTH ST. DENIS AND TED SHAWN IN CELEBRATING THEIR 50th \*  
\* ANNIVERSARY! \*  
\* Sacred Dance Guild members Mary Jane Wolbers and Helen Gray were present at the \*  
\* 50th Wedding Anniversary celebration of our Advisors, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn \*  
\* at Jacobs Pillow in Lee, Mass. on Aug. 13, 1964. \*  
\* The Aug. 1964 issue, Dance Magazine carries an excellent cover picture of them, \*  
\* also an article on pp. 36 & 37. Another good article on p. 42 of Aug. 21 TIME. \*  
\* We of the Sacred Dance Guild appreciate the influence they have been making in \*  
\* creativity, in the sponsoring of ethnic groups from all over the world, in the \*  
\* tremendous possibilities in religious dance. We rejoice with you and because of \*  
\* you both, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. \*  
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#### TV Announcements

Sept. 22 at 6:00 P.M. on Channel 5 WHDH-TV from Boston (color)

"Dateline Boston" presents THE FESTIVAL DANCE COMPANY, Naomi Aleh-Leaf, Dir.  
Special Sukkot Program

Coming this fall: no exact dates available:

Gus Solomons, Jr.: in "Juggler of Notre Dame" over LAMP UNTO MY FEET

John Butler: "Ceremony of Innocence" and "Jephtha" over CBS's LOOK UP AND LIVE

M.J.W. writes: "All of these are taped, also many that we have missed in previous seasons - because they are aired at church time when we seldom are able to see them. Do you suppose these films could be made available for use at Guild workshops?"

"It's not enough to be good. I've always told them, a great work of art reveals itself through its mystery." Louis Horst (in tribute by Walter Sorell)



# FALL WORKSHOPS involving SACRED DANCE GUILD MEMBERS

- Sept. 19 Workshop for Young Dance Choirs and Directors in Hartford, Conn.  
write: Helen Gray, 221 Girard St., Hartford, Conn.
- Sept. 26 Workshop at Cherry Hill, N.J.  
write: Pat Sonen, 47 Cleveland St., Orange, N.J.
- Oct. 3 WORKSHOP at First Cong'l. Church, Palo Alto, Calif. (Margaret Taylor)  
write: Mrs. MacCurdy, 1985 Louis Rd., Palo Alto, Calif.
- Oct. 11 - 18 Workshops daily led by Margaret Taylor in Honolulu area  
write: Rev. Seido Ogawa, 1040 Richards St., Honolulu, Hawaii
- Oct. 22, 23 Workshops in Chambersburg, Pa. led by Margaret Taylor  
write: Rev. B. McLain Cochran, 900 S. Arlington Ave., Harrisburg, Pa.
- Oct. 24 Presentation of "Worship in Dance" in Germantown, Pa. (1st Meth. Ch.)  
write: Mrs. Louise Curry, 250 Wyngate Rd., Jenkintown, Pa.
- Oct. 26, 27, 28, Presentations by Mary Jane Wolbers in 3 Stroudsburg Churches  
write: Mrs. Wolbers, 111 So. Green St., E. Stroudsburg, Pa.
- Oct. 31 SACRED DANCE GUILD FALL WORKSHOP in Medford, Mass. (Crane Theo. Sem.)  
write: Jeanne Saunders, 15 Ellis Rd., Weston, Mass.
- Oct. 31 Workshop for Teachers of Rel. Ed. and Dance Directors in Orange, N.J.  
write: Pat Sonen, 47 Cleveland St., Orange, N.J.
- Nov. 6-8 Biennial Convention - Pa. Council of Am. Hebrew Congregations with  
Noami Aleh-Leaf as consultant on Dance in Religious Services and  
Rabbi Milton Richman at Sabbath Service speaking on prayer  
write: Naomi Aleh-Leaf, 44 Atlantic Ave., Swampscott, Mass.
- Nov. 13, 14 Workshop in Toledo, O. area (Margaret Taylor as one of the leaders)  
write: Rev. Wm. Patterson, Maumee Meth. Church, Maumee, O.

SACRED DANCE GUILD ANNUAL MEETING AND WORKSHOP WILL BE HELD AROUND FEB. 22, 1965!  
(possibly Feb. 21 & 22)

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## A TIME FOR SACRED DANCE by Ruth H. Rayton, published in Children's Religion (excerpts) June, 1964

Dance, the response of man to life-meanings, is one of the most basic expressions of the total person. Paul Tillich has said, "Religion is man's total response to his creator." The sacred dance choir is one way of interpreting this response in worship.

Sacred dance is worship through symbolic movement. A symbol is a reality that has meaning beyond its own existence (flag, crucifix). Symbolic movements may express adoration, joy, prayer, penitence, anger, despair, or any other mood. A sacred dance choir is concerned with the exploration of movement as an interpretation of religious responses, ideas, moods and experiences of worship. A sacred dance choir endeavors to express religious emotions, to be motivated by a worshipful mood and to move to the glory of God. The dance choir member uses the human body as the instrument of communication, as a language of movement.

- As a sacred dance group works together many other objectives become apparent.
1. The persons are involved in all the dynamics of small group relationships and come to know the values of discipline, honest response, and group cooperation.
  2. Individuals wrestle with Christian meanings and are stimulated to sharpen their ideas so that they can be accurately communicated to others.
  3. Persons experience the meaning of serving with joy.
  4. Choir members experience first-hand the meaning of wholeness as body, mind and spirit respond in harmony.

Thus, sacred dance could be symbolic of an integrated life. What happens to the individual in a choir is paramount. He must learn how the body moves and how to say something with it. He must dedicate, train, and discipline the body to bring forth deep feelings and spiritual expressions. Eventually he may develop a



greater awareness of other's needs. He must desire to communicate with God sincerely and simply. He must also express God's promptings from within. My friend, Ruby Henderson, told me of the amazing healing, cleansing power and release in dancing to the glory of God which she saw at the Shaw House as she worked there.

Sacred dance is an art. It is not an art for its own sake but for its spiritual impact. Sacred dance can add vitality to various areas of the church's life. It can be and is as much a religious expression as the art of music or painting. It is always valuable to relate sacred dance to music, choric speech, poetry, drama, and all the arts, because as we explore the arts we discover that art reflects reality. Sacred dance helps us encounter reality on deeper levels.

And untrained group with something to say is preferable to a soulless, technically perfect group without a clear message. This is not meant to minimize the necessity for technique, but technique must not overshadow the real message. Simple movements can convey the true message and reach the inner being of the congregation partly because of the simplicity and partly because of the sincerity and inner conviction of the choir members. Sacred dance in worship is an inspiring and meaningful experience for all.

#### Letter to the Editor:

Re: "A Word About This Art Form" by Joan Johnson in 1963 Fall Newsletter  
and p. 14  
"Letter to the Editor" by Anonymous in April 1964 Newsletter p. 11

I find myself having to agree in part with both writers. On the one hand, I have seen well-choreographed, well-executed dance called "sacred" that has projected but a minimum of worship and has not brought me into the experience of communion with God as have some simpler presentations. Works that have left me cold I have heard acclaimed by the dance observers as the outstanding performances of the day, while the simpler ones that moved me deeply were passed over without comment.

On the other hand, though, I have personally found that the better my own dance training the better my own choreography and projection. Therefore on this side of the coin I find I need to strive for dance perfection, already achieved by the professional.

Accepting the facts which the above observations place before me, I conclude that the essential problem might be that too many works performed as sacred dance may not have had the DUAL EVALUATION of dance technique AND absorption in worship before they are presented as "sacred" dance. My own experience is a striking example.

Recently two of us choreographed a work through which we as the dancer felt deeply moved. We began of course by exploring with heart and soul and mind the spiritual message we wished to communicate. Translating this message into movement, we involved ourselves in all levels, covered a good amount of floor space, and gave ourselves an "A" rating in our use of dynamics. Dance-wise we thought we passed, and since every movement had worship meaning for us, we felt "all set". But this, we found, is only STEP NO. 1 for the dancer, professional or otherwise, who is creating a number to be used as worship.

STEP NO. 2 is to TEST IT for its assisting worshippers in the pews. The dancer himself is not the best one to do this because he cannot stand impersonally aside from his own work, his own "creation", to check its "worshipability". So the two of us took our work before what we called "The critics". These critics were not dancers; rather, they were superior representatives of the church members who would be observing our work. In three separate performances it was viewed by a minister, a minister's wife, and two church organists. They "checked" it for what it said to them as worshippers. You can imagine our disappointment to find that



## Letter to the Editor (cont.):

some movements which we enjoyed performing and which had spiritual meaning for us did NOT project to our viewers. In some instances they were noticeably distracted from the worship mood.

We might have said, "Well, after all, what do our church members know about dance?" And we would have been quite right in supposing that we knew more. But "dance" is not our goal; it is but the "means". And we are asking our viewers not "Is this good dance?" but rather "Do we - through our dance - achieve our goal, which is to help you to worship God?" Here our church members may be far superior to us in judging!

The two of us found that if we were going to be absolutely honest in not underestimating the value of STEP NO. 2, we would have to eliminate some of the dance movements that were ESTHETICALLY effective but not WORSHIPFULLY so. We did this and we found that, after all, there are a lot more ways than one to dance what you want to say. The important thing is that in taking STEP NO. 2 - checking our well-choreographed dance for its purpose of expressing worship - we found a pattern that was perhaps equally as good as the first one dance-wise and infinitely BETTER than the first as far as worship was concerned.

So perhaps our problem lies not in a cut-and-dried division between the better dance works of the professional and the simpler symbolic movements of the non-dancer, but rather in the degree to which EACH takes STEP NO. 2 and honestly checks the projection and communication of what he creates. The more satisfied one is with what he has created dance-wise, the harder it may be to accept the changes recommended by non-dancing church members who view the work with the purpose of worship in mind. But greater is the likelihood of the dancer's achieving his REAL goal if he honors the authenticity of concerned church members and seeks to create his dances with awareness of this.

The two of us know --for the overwhelming response of a large group of worshipers as they felt involved in our work when we finally presented it bears witness to this!

Janet Walz

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The United Church Press announces the publication date of Oct. 10, 1964 for TIME FOR DISCOVERY by Margaret Fisk Taylor. 22 drawings; 3 songs \$3.25  
This may be ordered directly from the United Church Press, 1505 Race St., Phil. Pa.

"The author has done for leaders of 8-12 year olds what she did earlier for 5-7 year olds in Time for Wonder, namely produced material for training in creative dramatic movement as an assisting religious education art. Recognizing the natural break in the physical and mental equipment of the children in this older group, she divides the book into two parts: the first part for 8 & 9 year olds; the second for the 10-12's. The material is beamed mainly at leaders in religious ed. -- whether in church school, weekday or vacation church schools, junior choirs, family camps - leaders who recognize that Christian education is more a matter of growing experience in the everyday life of the child than a series of class instruction periods. There are many specific suggestion-demonstrations: hymns, parables, carols, relating to others, ways to relieve tension, etc. . . . But in every suggestion the author makes it abundantly clear that the leader should not feel hamstrung by the printed instruction, but should preferably proceed with her own ideas and the ideas of the children. The teacher's function is to create a climate which permits the child to discover himself."

In FAMILY DEVOTIONS (A Daily Guide for Families with School-Age Children) for Nov. and Dec., 1964, Margaret Taylor has contributed two weeks in Nov. for family devotions with some movement. Order from Pilgrim Press, Boston, Mass. 15¢ each.



This spring George Washington University in Washington, D.C. sponsored a program called "Religion and the Fine Arts". The Committee on Religious Life explored the common link that joins religion and the creative arts in their joint concerns with the great eternal themes of mankind.

In the symposium, "The Roots of Creativity", James Mosel, professor of psychology made these remarks: "Religious experience is a highly creative art. The great movements in religion have always been examples of creativity. Martin Luther, for instance, was saying something new in man's experience.

"The thing which seems to make religion dynamic, instead of static, is that a vital religion is always becoming instead of being. . . . If you think of theology as a continuous revelation, in a state of continuously unfolding or becoming, then you can look upon art or science as avenues for the exploration of religion, even if this is not their immediate purpose."

This article and excellent pictures appeared in the Washington Post, Mar. 29, 1964. There is a picture of an original work, "Jeremiah" choreographed by Elizabeth Burtner, teacher of dance at the University. The picture includes two college men and three college girls, but the whole group included nine women and four men.

The article describes the work of "Jeremiah": "Miss Burtner has set the prophet's conflict with his people and his own inner doubts to dance against the hypnotic rhythms of Leonard Bernstein's 'Jeremiah Symphony'. . . . The part of the prophet is played by Peter Pazzaglini, a pre-med student. Excerpt from the Bible is read to the accompaniment of kettle drums and cymbals. The costumes, which will be rich and oriental in feeling, have been designed by Donald C. Kline, chairman of the art department, and are being made by art students."

ed. note: What a marvellous inter-relating experience which will be long remembered. Would that all colleges would have such an annual event.

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Professional TV Dance Programs are always interesting, but not always "perfect". Ann Barzel TV reviewer for Dance Magazine has excellent discrimination. Here is a review of the Ballet of Job from June Dance Magazine (1964):

"The Bible perennially challenges the non-literary arts, including dance. In the case of a fast-moving story, or of a definite emotion, dance can interpret, even heighten a Biblical episode. But in some instances, such as the intellectual the philosophical, ethical and moral concepts involved in the Book of Job, a dancer can become a cropper as did Neville Black in his Ballet of Job, presented for NBC-TV on April 19. The piety of Job, the happy togetherness of his children, Job's physical agony were clear enough. . . . However, the real issues of the Book of Job - man's destiny, his relation to God, ethical concepts involved - were not even hinted at."

As members of the Sacred Dance Guild we should be as discriminating as Miss Barzel.

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"Once again, Sophie Maslow has reached back into the past to find a theme pertinent to the day. From the Book of Ruth (Khachaturian) draws on the biblical story of Ruth, which is a plea for improved relations between races and religions. A secondary theme is the friendship of Naomi and Ruth. Miss Maslow succeeds in portraying the less important theme, but the subtlety and indirectness of the greater theme evade her. "

from June 1964 Dance Magazine



## WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING:

Evelyn Broadbent is teaching four Monday sessions at Claremont's School of Chr. Ed. this fall. The course is on "Creative Use of Music and Scripture in Chr. Ed." This will be an interdenominational group. (N.H.)

Nels Anderson of Michigan: "At our Youth Ministry camp I conducted a special interest group in Rhythmic Choir work. Then at our week long Fine Arts Conference for Young People we offered Drama, Dance, and Creative Writing. . . . Our Dean felt very strongly the need of everyone at the Conference to explore movement; so each morning I led a session for the entire group in what we called 'Body Movement'. I had the group for an hour. As my basic text I used Barbara Mettler's book Basic Dance on a Group Level. We really had fun together. Then each day in the area of specialization, the students met for three hours in Dance. Mrs. Joe Cooley and Mrs. Ruth Loomis worked with me. We had a period each morning of Basic Interest in Modern Dance and then spent time in composition.

Margaret Fisk Taylor of Ohio: The United Church of Christ sponsored a Creative Arts Conference for H.S. young people. Drama, Movement, Music and Art were offered. Each one chose a field to specialize in - spending three hours each morning. The emphasis was on the creative angle in all four fields. Each group moved in rotation to have a master session in each of the other arts. Also the evenings centered in panels and participation dealing with the various arts. I taught the group which chose movement as their creative art and Shirley Fritz assisted me. In the closing evening our group offered their creative works with one section assisted by Foster McElfresh's improvising and another portion to interpret a choral number created by the music group. I hope there will be more creative arts conferences such as Nels Anderson and I have had the opportunity to be involved in. The arts are all interrelated and every one finds new meanings beyond verbal communication. On Oct. 3 I shall lead an all day workshop in Palo Alto, Calif. at the First Cong'l. Church. On Oct. 10 - 18 I shall lead workshops daily at various parts of Oahu for my visit is being sponsored by the Honolulu Council of Churches. On Oct. 23-24 I shall have workshops at the Annual State-wide S.S. Convention for Penna. to be held at Chambersburg, Pa. On Nov. 13 -14 I shall be a leader at a Religious Drama Workshop at the Maumee Methodist Church for Toledo area churches in Toledo, Ohio.

Joan Bare of Penna. taught a week of daily classes for children 6 - 16 during the Creative Arts Week (July 27-31) at the Calvary Meth. Church, in Philadelphia. "The neighborhood children invited to participate were a selected talent-inclined group mostly negro children. Each day I taught five classes according to ages. The children showed great interest, ability and cooperation. Other creative arts included in the program were art, drama, writing, music and crafts." Among the selections that the children worked on were "Were You There", "Go Tell Mary and Martha", "Rejoice the Lord is King", "The Lord's Prayer", "The Creation" and "This is my Father's World".

Alma Tucker invited Lynn Sherwood to come to the Abyssinian Baptist Church in N.Y. City on June 7 to be the choreographer-teacher involving the Rhythmic Choir of this Baptist Church in a Worship Service, "Let There Be Light". The development of the theme of Light gave meaning and continuity to the total service. Some of the dances were: Prayer of Invocation to Bach's "Break Forth, O Beautious Light"  
Prayer for Guidance with movement to the spoken prayer  
"The Light is ours if we can but receive it" danced by Lynn to part of Vivaldi's "Four Seasons"  
Benediction - a ceremony of candle-lighting in dance also to part of Vivaldi's "Four Seasons"



Mary Jane Wolbers has been invited to present a Lecture-Demonstration on "Dance as a Dimension of Worship" for three "Family Night" programs to be presented in three churches on Oct. 26, 27, 28 in Stroudsburg; Cherry Valley Meth. Church, Poplar Valley Meth. Church and St. Luke's Meth. Church. (Penna.)

She attended the "Dance Education for the Deaf" Conference at Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C.. She writes: I found an active interest in religious dance and many conferees requested information about the Sacred Dance Guild. This, the first annual conference of its kind, is to be followed by an expanded session next year on the campus of the University of Dayton, O. June 28 - 30, 1965 which will include consideration of more handicapping conditions."

Mary Jane attended the S.D.G. Institute at Drew University on June 26-28 and she served in the program as a consultant in "production and mechanics problems".

Pat Lawrence Jewitt of Shaker Heights, Ohio: "I present a program entitled: Religious Expression Through Dance. It is in the nature of a lecture-demonstration. .... tho I do use basic costuming. I do this approximately once a week for various church groups and organizations throughout the season from Sept. to June. I have been doing this in this area for at least five years. I start with primitive religious expression and work through religious medieval to the present time. The major part of the program time is given to our contemporary sacred dance.

"Many times during the year I am called upon to lead sections of workshops in the areas of creative movement for children and religious dance. These workshops are sponsored by various groups: individual churches, denomination, etc. For many years, I have taught the dance workshop section of the Religious Drama Workshop sponsored by the National Council of Churches - first in Green Lake and for the last few years at Lake Forest.

"During the fall I work with a group from a couple of Inner-City Protestant Parish Churches. We meet once a week from the beginning of October till Christmas. At the end of our session the group presents a program for interested Inner-City churches. . . by this I mean that we go to each church. This group is of high school age and a most responsive and interested one.

"During the Christmas season I work with two other women in what I call a Christmas Dance Trio. We have a program entitled "Legends and Stories of Christmas Through Dance". Starting with medieval legends and dance we work on through a section of the story of the nativity which is threaded together with familiar carols. I speak a part of the story directly from St. Luke and then a relevant carol is danced and so on. We go on to present both the joyousness of the season and the deeper meaning. This particular program, believe it or not, was an outgrowth of a lot of my work with the Junior League of Cleveland. The other two League girls and myself had been involved in many volunteer performing activities and then somehow this particular program evolved. I did the choreographing and arranging of the material. The sponsoring group is the Junior League of Cleveland. With its blessing and support we presented this program 8 to 10 times for settlement house gatherings, homes for the aged, churches, etc. This program has met with great success and has been very meaningful to the three of us in sharing it with others. We are already quite 'booked' up for this coming Christmas 1964."

Dianne Gustafson reports from Miami, Florida: "The Sacred Dance Guild of Miami presented a special T.V. program on the Educational Community Television on July 22, 1964 at 9:00 P.M. It was a half hour program including the following dances: "No Man is an Island", "Finlandia" and "Simple Gifts". The program was entitled "A Triptych of Bells". Members participating were: Diana Avery, director; Dianne Gustafson, Barbara Schumacher, Judy Bennett, Pat Ozersky and Paul Avery."

Jan McMurry of Canton, Ohio will be teaching in the Canton Christian School of Religion for six weeks every Tuesday evening for two hours starting Sept. 22. This will be held at Zion Lutheran Church - the course is on rhythmic movement.



## WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING (continued):

Faith Clark of Normal, Illinois presented a dance prayer as a part of the Fine Arts Festival on May 1 in the Unitarian Church. As the dance teacher at Illinois State University she can be pleased with the excellent review given her Orchesis Concert in May: "Through pure dance movement, aided by evocative costumes and excellent lighting, the Orchesis Dance Concert was one of the most creative works of art seen on our campus." Among the 16 creative works two were obviously religious in nature: Religious Primitive (Man's concern with his religion . . his heritage) and A Common Bond (Man's Search for God . . alone and together).

Louise Mattlage reports that her Dancers of Faith - the Southport Conn. Group - presented a Workshop Concert on Aug. 24 in Eddy's Barn in Southport. Works offered were: Dance for the Temple of Understanding, He's Got the Whole World in His Hands, Deep River and Oh, Dem Golden Slippers, The Hundredth Psalm. This group is planning for a program at the Synagogue in Brooklyn, N.Y. in Nov. and at Grace Methodist Church in New Rochelle, N.Y. in Jan. There are eight members in this group. Louise also directs a Pennsylvania group of Dancers of Faith. They will present a similar program at International House in Philadelphia on Nov. 20. This group presented a program on Dance as a Dimension of Worship over Channel 12, Educational T.V. Among their numbers was their interpretation of Psalm 96. This program was presented this summer at the Arden Playhouse in Wilmington, Del.

Helen Gray of Hartford Conn. writes: "Our South Church group for choreographic worship has been well received this summer as part of our Pilgrim Fellowship's round the world visit to churches in many countries including Hawaii, Fiji, Australia (where some was televised) and India. This group wears below knee-length tunics - free flowing at the back and caught front center by a belt thus leaving sides free for arm lifting.

On Sept. 19 a workshop is scheduled for beginning groups of the Hartford area to be held at South Church. Pat Sonen and Miss Ruth St. Denis plan to be there. The workshop will be 9:30 - 3:30 at 277 Main St., Hartford.

We are starting a women's group Tuesday mornings 9:30 - 11.00!

Being close enough to visit Jacob's Pillow I've enjoyed the Sunday night lectures. Walter Terry gave a valuable lecture. Also I had a fine conference with La Meri on religious dance."

Joan Johnson of Minneapolis reports that her Worship Choir of the House of Prayer Lutheran Church was invited to contribute the closing evening service on June 20 for the Minnesota Luther League Convention held at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn. The service was in a thrilling contemporary Chapel which seats 1,500. In the paragraphs that describe the Worship Choir there is this thought: "The Worship Choir wishes to express its appreciation for this opportunity to share this worship medium with you. We pray that as you worship with us you may be brought closer to knowing our Lord and Saviour." Her group includes boys as well as girls. Based on the framework of the Lord's Prayer it developed in this way: PROCESSIONAL: "Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart"; OUR FATHER: "Spirit of God"; WHO ART IN HEAVEN: "Praise Ye the Lord"; CALLED BE THY NAME: "Holy, Holy, Holy"; THY KINGDOM COME: "In Christ There is no East or West"; THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN: "This is My Father's World"; GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD: The Twenty-third Psalm; AND FORGIVE US --- AS WE FORGIVE: "With Broken Heart"; AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US ---: "My Faith Looks Up To Thee"; FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, THE GLORY: "Battle Hymn of the Republic"; FOREVER AMEN: "The Lord's Prayer" (Robertson).

Susan Hollis of Fall River, Mass. writes: "The Sacred Dance Choir of the Central Congregational Church of Fall River appeared on television on Sunday, Sept. 6 as



part of a worship service under the auspices of the Fall River Council of Churches. The worship service was led by the minister of Central Church, the Reverend Mr. Allen Hollis, who concerned himself with the glorification of God, an excellent example of which was shown in the dancing of the Lord's Prayer by six members of the dance choir.

Elizabeth Covill will carry on the work of the Sacred Dance Choir of Beneficent Congregational Church in Providence, R.I. as Elsie Simmons moves to a new position at 14 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. This Sacred Dance Choir presented a Service of Worship sponsored by the R.I. Cong'l. Youth Ministry Board and it was held in the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, N.H. This service included Psalm 95, also a three part scripture sequence: People of the Covenant in Bondage (Psalm 137), People of the Covenant Find Hope (Isaiah passage), That Hope Fulfilled (Were You There). Three young men interpreted this last number using the choreography by Evelyn Broadbent of N.H. The sermon was presented in the form of a dance-drama, "True Freedom!" - the outline of the sequence and the music (by Yakovac) obtained from Margaret Fisk Taylor. There are seven girls and three boys in this Choir.

Dosia Carlson of Defiance, Ohio writes: "Throughout the last two semesters the Defiance College Pilgrims, an interracial, coeducational group, has been busy leading creative expression workshops and worship services in over a dozen churches of Ohio and Indiana. Primary activities include demonstration of rhythmic choir and choric speech selections followed by actual experimental interpretations created by all participating. These afternoon-evening sessions for youth usually conclude with a service of worship led by the Pilgrims.

"Climaxing this academic season was a two-hour program the Pilgrims presented for the spring conference for the Northwest Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ which includes 125 churches. The general theme, "Racial Justice Now", provided opportunities for interpreting freedom songs, spirituals, and passages from Martin Luther King. Rhythmic and choric speech choirs combined for dramatic episodes and closing worship. The Pilgrims have several invitations for this fall.

Pat Sonen of Orange, N.J. writes: "My dance workshop for the Unitarian-Universalist youth at Star Island, N.H. was quite successful - but fantastically demanding on me spiritually and physically."

Judy Bennett of Cornwall, N.Y. This summer she led a Workshop in Creative Movement with 9 - 12 year olds at Five Points Mission summer camp for N.Y. City children. "I found myself in an 'Impromptu Demonstration' at the request of the staff of a Curriculum Workshop at Camp Epworth. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce Methodist (church school teachers, ministers and rel. ed. directors) to our new church school curriculum. I was there as a student, but was 'drafted' when news of my other life leaked out! On 12 hours notice I recruited 4 other young women and we worked at odd moments between classes to present a hymn from the new curriculum at the evening worship around a campfire. It was cold, the light was bad, and if we stepped off the tarp provided for us, the grass was dry and sharp. Things came off surprisingly well, and the response was good. Not my favorite type of program, but the sort of request we all receive from time to time. In September my inter-denominational adult dance group will begin working again. We have 5 requests for programs this fall. In October I will begin teaching in a nursery school and plan to use a great deal of movement with the children."

Bob Storer of Winchester, Mass. writes: "This spring the dance editor of the Boston Globe interviewed me and wrote up a fine article for a Sunday edition with pictures. This resulted in several inquiries.

(continued on following p.)



## WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING (continued):

Virginia Huffine of Winchester, Mass. received a letter from the Rev. Mr. Paul John Rich in whose church she had danced. Here is an excerpt: "The comments without exception were favorable. Several of the old timers found themselves delighted in spite of themselves. It really made people feel that dancing is not 'arty' but something that could be understandable and enjoyable to the average person. My idea of worship is total worship, with music and movement coordinated with the lessons and sermon."

Louise Curry of Jenkintown, Pa. announces that as a part of the First Methodist Church's Religious Arts Festival Oct. 22-25 "Worship in Dance" will be performed by the Beaver College Modern Dance Club under the direction of Pat Baier who is teacher of modern dance at Beaver College in Glenside, Pa. This demonstration program will be presented at 3:15 on Sat. Oct. 24. The cast will consist of a narrator, organist and 10 members of the dance group. There are plans for a new dance group to be organized this year at this First Methodist Church in Germantown.

Elyse Robert of Pacific Palisades, Calif. writes: "I am affiliated with the Ruth St. Denis studio and have started my own Rhythmic Choirs in Laguna Beach and Santa Monica. The Laguna Beach Rhythmic Choir under my leadership has appeared in the Santa Ana Unity Church and in various clubs. In May I presented in Laguna a "Memorial Ode" in memory of the war dead. I used a group of women - professionals and amateurs mixed and the project was taken on 16 mm. film. In September I will start classes in my own home in Pacific Palisades and will continue work with the Laguna group.

Noami Aleh-Leaf writes: "Since my introduction to SDG, first through M.J. Wolbers and then Ruby Henderson, I have been greatly impressed by the calibre of the participating members of the guild. They are religious in the true sense, inspired by the highest motives and dedicated to ideals of a more meaningful religious experience.

Noami's News Release about her TV Program may reach the readers of our Newsletter too late - but the announcement is that on Sept. 22 at 6 p.m. on Channel 5 WHDH-TV on "Dateline Boston" The Festival Dance Company under the direction of Noami Aleh-Leaf will present a special program to celebrate The Festival of Sukkot. Noami lives in Swampscott, Mass.

On Nov. 6 at the Biennial Convention - Penn. Council of Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform) at the Sabbath Service Rabbi Milton Richman will speak on new thinking on prayer in his sermon and Noami will dance in the Service.

Ruth Rayton of Hanover, N.H. with her Sacred Dance Choir has presented this summer a Vesper Service relating the Symbols of the Seasons: Summer: "For the Beauty of the Earth" ; Fall: "Rejoice, Ye Pure in heart"; Winter: "I Wonder as I Wander" and Lord's Prayer (to antiphonal reading); Spring: "Christ the Lord is Risen Today"; and for Pentecost the circle symbolized in "This is My Father's World". This was presented twice. For the Benediction all participated in "Let there be Peace in the World, O, Lord, and may it begin with me" with symbolic movements.

Mary Jane Wolbers of E. Stroudsburg, Pa. Here are some other items that I failed to include! On May 5 she presented a Lecture-demonstration on the Sacred Dance at the Presbyterian Church, Stroudsburg for the regular monthly meeting of Monroe County Ministerium. On May 7 she presented a Demonstration of Religious Dances for the annual Donors' Dinner sponsored by Hadassah, Temple Israel of Stroudsburg.



14.

Jane Dexter of Hempstead, L.I., N.Y., director of the Sacred Dance Choir of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Central Nassau presented "Conflict-Decision" as a part of the morning service on June 7. Miss Dexter has been a teacher of dance at William and Mary College and Adelphi University. The group works cooperatively with freedom in offering ideas and the music was composed by one of the Choir.

Laura Dunham of the Amherst Community Church in Snyder, N.Y. sends this notice: "The Sacred Dance Choir of our Jr. Hi Fellowship became 'International' on Saturday April 18 when by special invitation it went to Toronto to participate in the Sacred Music Night of the Baptist Young Peoples' Union. The choir of five girls is directed by Laura and Mrs. Carol Russell. They offered a brief statement of the place of dance in Christian Worship, an interpretation of certain scriptures related to human tensions supported by the piano and drum rendition of 'Be Thou My Vision'. Mrs. Russell interpreted in dance the closing verses of Romans 8. The program concluded with stirring movement to portions of Hagedorn's "The Bomb That Fell on America". Our Sacred Dance Choir rehearses Monday afternoons during released time." ed.note: What a strong and stimulating selection of material!)

Judy Ahlfield of Drew University, Madison, N.J. works with a group of "Drew Wives" Last Christmas they presented a service in Craig Chapel and they will be active this fall.

Bess Hailo, director of the Sacred Dance Choir of the First Reformed Church in Schenectady, N.Y., reports that for Palm Sunday Vespers the Dance Choir assisted in interpreting "The Builders" by Joseph W. Clokey. This is a cantata for children's choirs.

Edwin Carter, minister of the First Congregational Church in Cromwell, Conn., will retire as pastor there on Oct. 1, 1964 to live at E. Dennis, Mass. He has directed the Rhythmic Choir in that church continuously since Oct. 1948! What a record! In the summer of 1948 Margaret Taylor led an introductory workshop in West Hartford. Ed. Carter, Evelyn Broadbent and Virginia Lucke were there, too. Now Miss Mary Henderson of Cromwell will carry on as director.  
ed. note: Ed., why not start a choir in E. Dennis?

Pat Sonen, Marilyn Loupus and Katherine Bjornson presented sacred dances for the Rutherford Unitarian Church, N.J. and in the late spring for the Sommerville, N.J. Unitarian Fellowship. Pat interpreted "The Negro Protest" to original jazz music by Charles Austin; Katherine presented "In Memoriam - J.F. Kennedy" to original music by Trygvie Bjornson.

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This is the widest and fullest sharing of activities of our members that we have had - two more pages than in the April issue! Keep it up! Make use of the ideas mentioned and write for full information about these to any of the members who are mentioned. The full address list is at the end of the Newsletter.

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Bruce King, professional dancer, conducted a workshop on creative teaching at the National Catholic Conference on Aug. 27 in Detroit.

Lorraine Havercroft, 901 Harrison St., Syracuse, N.Y. presented a solo to a poem on "The Miracle of Spring" at May Men. Unitarian Church in March.

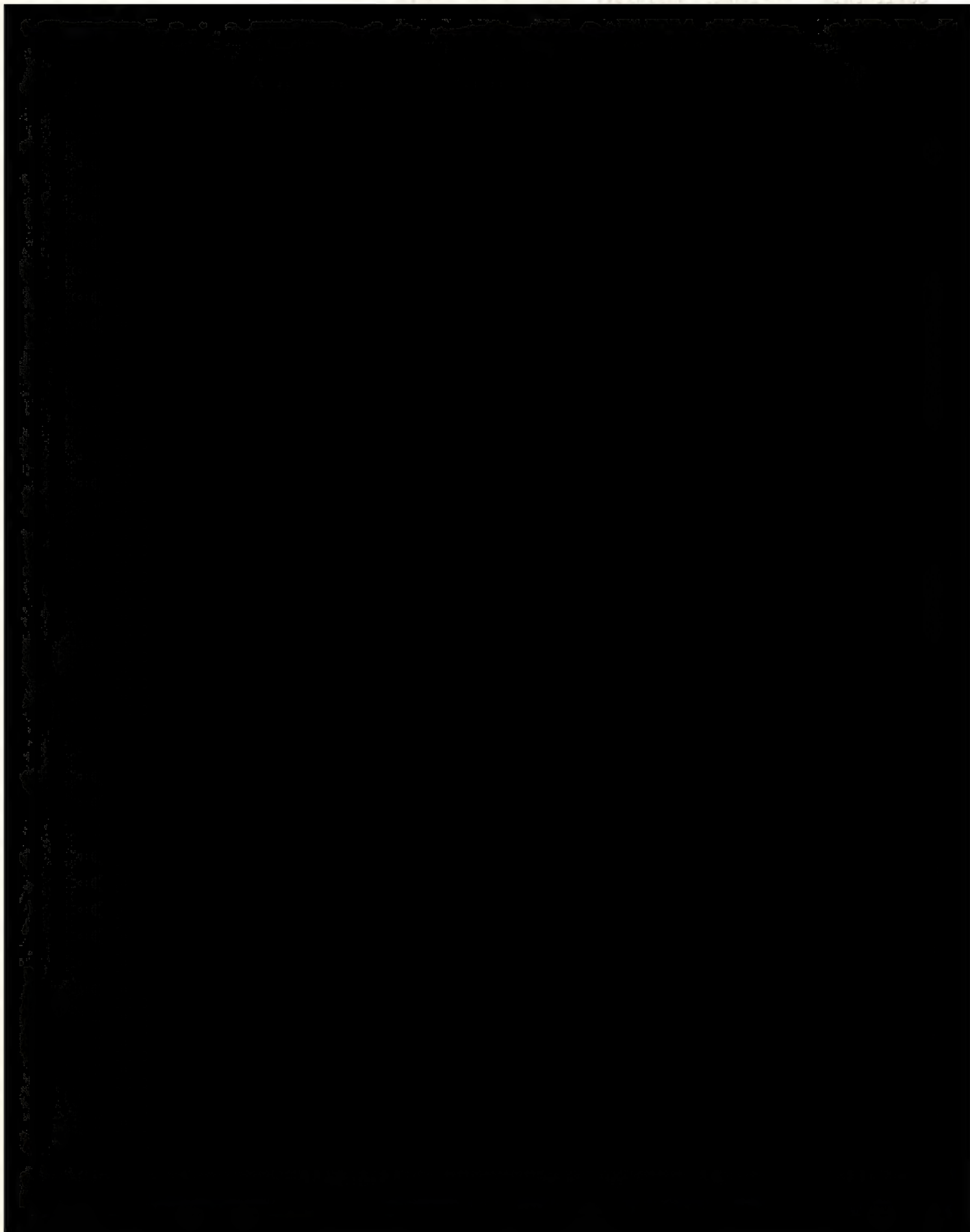


SACRED DANCE GUILD MEMBERSHIP LIST 1964 - 1965

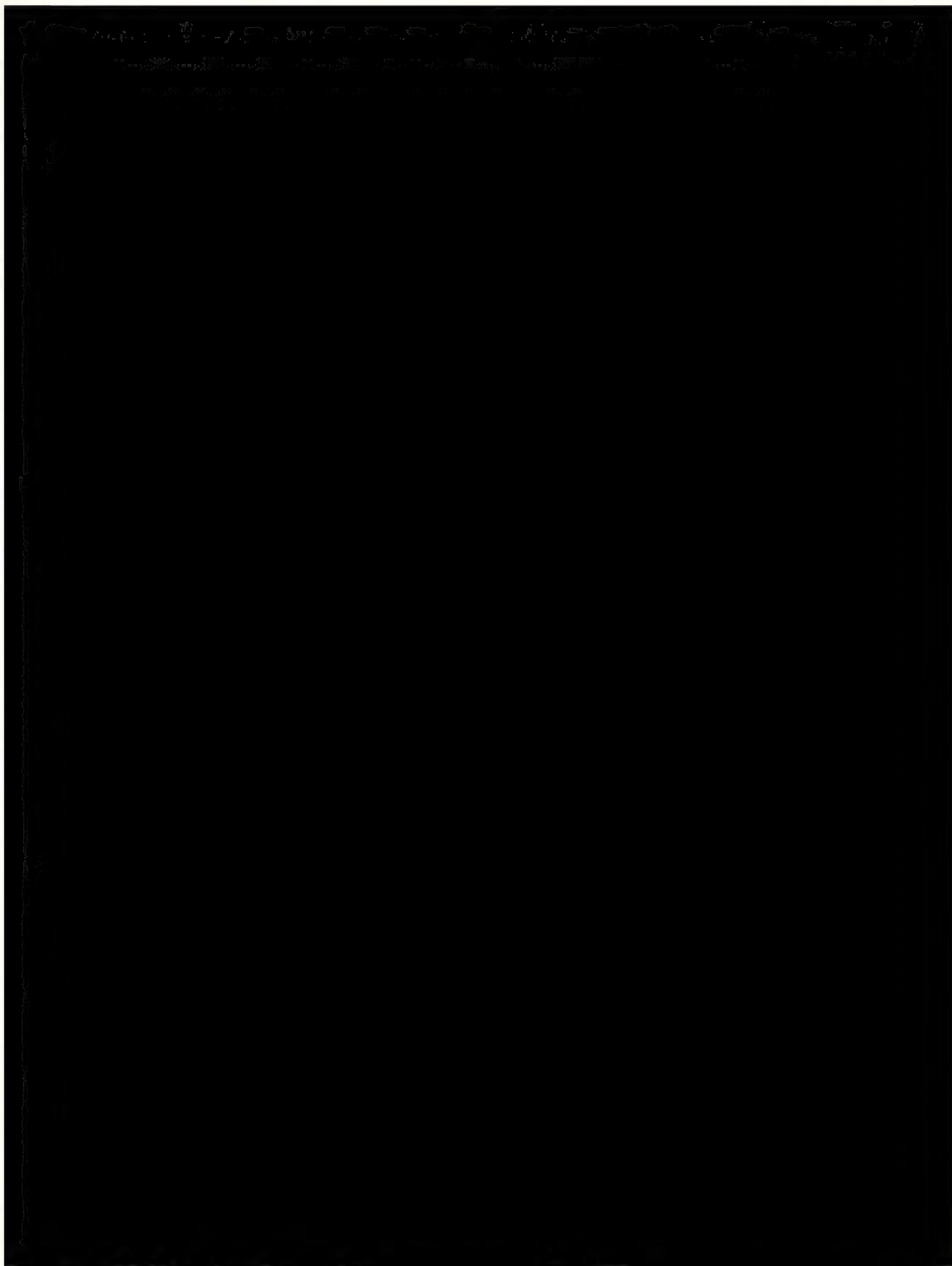
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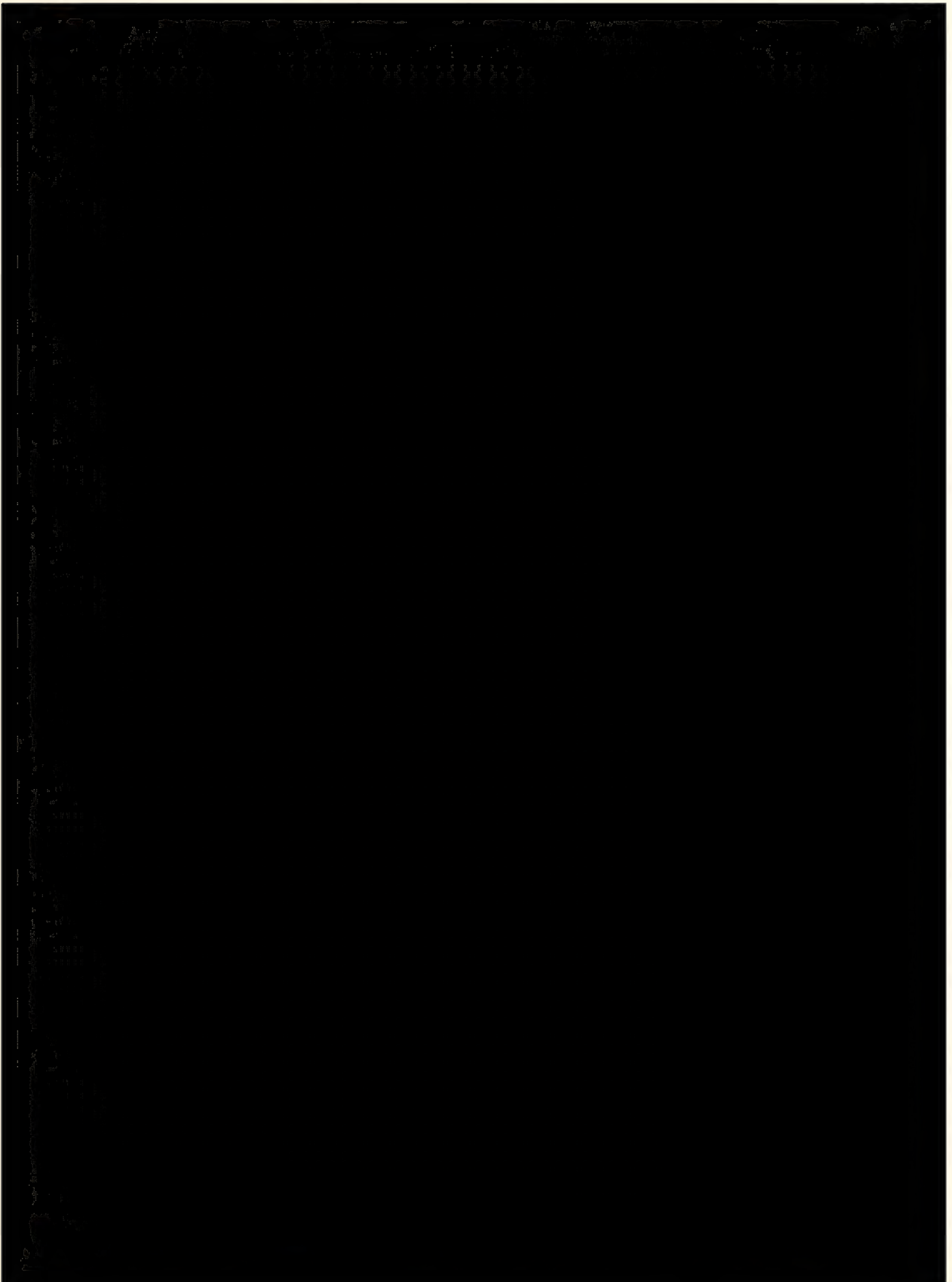














Also, please save this membership list for your own reference. This is the first time that the membership has received a full listing.

The Guild has the following functional committees. Write to its members if you have specific questions or suggestions :

WORSHIP RESOURCE COMMITTEE - Jeanne Fuller, Chairman

Members: Virginia Lucke, Janet Walz, Lynn Sherwood, Helen Gray,  
Margaret Taylor

CHANCEL DANCE GROUP -

Current Membership: Lynn Sherwood, Jeanne Fuller, Brenda Rounds,  
Judy McCook, Judy Bloom

Activities: This group meets once a week. As part of their repertoire they plan to use Bach's "Sleepers Awake" as an invocation. They also are working on an advent selection. They have been invited by the Presby. Arts and Worship Com. and by the Nat. Council of Churches for a noon worship service. This is open to skilled dancers.

STUDY COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE RELATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS OF THE GUILD WITH  
DENOMINATIONAL AND INTERDENOMINATIONAL GROUPS

Jeanne Fuller - representative

Contact was made with Mrs. Jeanne Carruthers, Sec., Office of Fine Arts of the National Council of Churches. The committee on Religion and the Arts is still being formed. There is hope that the Sacred Dance Guild will be represented on the permanent committee.

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Please share this Newsletter with your minister and director of education. Let's widen our Membership with gift subscriptions for the NL informs and shares.